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ABSTRACT

Guidelines are provided in this brief paper for increasing preschool children's cultural awareness by implementing aspects of a multicultural curriculum. First, standards for selecting personnel who are able to effectively implement cultural awareness activities are listed. Then procedures and materials for teaching preschool children how to differentiate positive differences and similarities, how to enjoy themselves, and how to accept differences in others are illustrated. Subsequently, illustrative activities for increasing children's awareness of cultures, ethnic groups, and racial groups are suggested. Finally, general guidelines are stipulated which are considered to be basic to all cultural awareness activities and particularly important in work with non-English speaking preschoolers. A seasonal calendar of children's festivals from many lands is appended, listing continent, country, name of festival, and date and factual background information. Illustrative activities for several of the festivals are also appended. (RH)

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Positive Approach to Self-Awareness - Multicultural Awareness

S. LaVernn Wilson

Traditionally, the programs designed to help preschoolers to become aware of cultural and ethnic groups and their social interactions are usually american, seasonal, national holidays, and special days. Many times the holiday is a major emphasis rather than the culture that contributed to the festive celebration. For example, on Thanksgiving, preschoolers make and wear Indian headbands that are overpowered by the smells of turkey and giblet gravy. On Valentine's Day, the making of silhouettes is underplayed by the passing out of valentines and having a party. To celebrate Brotherhood Week, a black american is invited to the preschool. The purpose of the visit is forgotten by preschoolers almost immediately after he/she leaves.

It is not that the celebration of national, seasonal, and declared holidays are not valuable curriculum ideas for any preschool. These celebrations, if not integrated into the total multicultural curriculum become like a child's new toy at Christmas - discarded as quickly as they are received because of the overwhelming stimuli at Christmas time.

If one of the goals of a preschool is to provide preschoolers with the concept of multicultural ethnicity, preschool staff must begin to value the richness of a multicultural world in which different groups have made valuable contributions to happiness and joy and that the celebrations of these joys and happinesses cross ethnic and racial grounds.

In order to formalize a multicultural curriculum in a preschool, then one must select a competent staff, design learning activities that foster positive multicultural awareness, develop a resource library containing filmstrips, tapes, brochures, records that depict different racial and ethnic groups, plan field trips in nearby communities and museums, encourage non-English speaking

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parents to enroll their children into a preschool, and finally, include in your center's newsletters the goals of your program and the strategies you intend to use to foster positive regard towards others.

Staffing

Paramount to a successful multicultural curriculum is the staff that has to teach it. In selecting staff, one should seek teachers, aides, custodians, secretaries who exhibit the following behaviors.

1. Flexibility.
2. Sensitivity to and awareness of positive cultural and ethnic differences.
3. Accepting racial, ethnic, physical, and handicapped differences.
4. Curious about the contibution of multiethnicity of the world.
5. Committed to working with different kinds of groups.
6. Creative in their teaching skills.

If a staff does not exhibit the majority of these behaviors, there should be training sessions devoted to multicultural awareness.

Learning Activities

Initially, activities should be devoted to the preschooler's self-concept development. The child should be taught how to differentiate positive differences and likes, how to enjoy him/herself, how to accept differences in others. A suggested list of these activities could be:

Activity #1: We Are Different

Materials: Two dolls.

Procedure: Teacher asks students to verbalize in what ways are the dolls different and alike. (After each response, teacher should praise and encourage) Teacher asks for two volunteer real "dolls" to stand up. Teacher asks students to verbalize how the real "dolls" are alike and different.

Activity #2: Sexual Differences

Without getting into a study of a anatomy, ask students to state differences between boys and girls, also what is similiar about boys and girls - For example:

Do boys need water? Do girls need sleep? Do boys

need clean clothes? Do boys have hair? How is hair different? Can girls see balloons? How are eyes different?

Each day another dimension can be added to this activity until the preschoolers demonstrate an awareness of likes and differences among themselves.

Activity #3: Dwelling Differences

Materials: Pictures of homes.

Procedure: Teacher asks students to talk about their own homes: What is similiar in homes? Do they all have at least one bathroom? Do they all have kitchens?
Continue this activity until the basic requirements of a home are mentioned.
How are homes different? Teacher shows different shapes of homes, etc.

All these initial activities are focused on the individual child in his present setting. The next group of activities are planned to provoke an awareness of cultures, ethnic groups, and racial groups.

Activity #1: Hello in Many Languages

Materials: A tape with hello spoken in many languages.

Procedure: Students will listen and repeat hello in French, Spanish, Swahili, Chinese, Japanese, Yiddish, Arabic.

Follow-up: Have parents reinforce this activity at home.

Activity #2: Language Frustration

Materials: An English speaking song.

Procedure: Play song at normal speed and have students sing along with song. Play song at a faster speed. Have students try to sing along. Discuss with the students how did they feel when they could not duplicate the song at the fast speed. Tell students that this is the way we sound to Sanchez (any foreign student). Play song at regular speed. Tell students that someday this is the way we will sound to Sanchez.

Activity #3: International Days

Sources: Ask the international student organization on your campus to your center to share the following with preschoolers:

a. music
b. dance
c. festive dress
d. artifacts
e. food

Activity #4: Different Culture Cut Outs

Materials: Pictures of children from different cultures in their ethnic costumes (old Unicef cards and calendars).

Procedure: Cut pictures in half. Have each child match the correct half to make a total picture.

Strategies for Working with Non-English Speaking Preschoolers

The non-English speaking preschooler will make the transition much easier if the preschool is multicultural in its attitude and approach. The English speaking preschoolers who have had positive experiences in self-awareness and awareness of others will help the "new" child overcome the frustration of languages, dress, speech, and culture differences. However, there are some guidelines that must be adhered to if a successful transition is to take place. These guidelines are universal in scope and are integral to the entire awareness activities.

1. Never assume the non-English speaking parent or child understands all of the American language idioms.

2. Speak slowly and clearly.

3. Do not use complicated sentences or "catchy" expressions (the child will learn them soon enough).

4. Be patient. Don't force the child or the parent to assimilate quickly.

5. Encourage parents to speak English, but don't force them.

6. Eliminate as much pressure as possible.
   a. Don't force interplay with peers.
   b. If possible, talk to parents in private areas of your center until they are relaxed to speak around others.
   c. Allow the child and the parents to observe the activities at the center.
   d. Always talk to the child in English - not fractured English.

e. Be aware of and understand aggression in the non-English speaking child. It may be his/her only way to get rid of his/her frustration; especially language frustration.

7. Make the child and the parents feel comfortable around you.

8. Remember, language does come if love and understanding abounds.

9. Hug the child; it is an international language.

At our center we have attempted to include information throughout the year. Example: During gardening, information on American Indians is included. Spring festival; those from other cultures.

Once the american and foreign child realizes the spirit of a multicultural environment, the curriculum can be developed to reflect year-round ideas to cultural and radical differences. For example, in the spring when a garden is planted, activities can be developed to reflect the contribution made by the American Indians and other cultures. Spring festivals from different cultures can easily be adapted to a multicultural curriculum. For example, several countries value water at planting time. The adaptation of water festivals in a preschool center leads to a culture awareness that is fun as well as educational. A list of festivals will be included in the bibliography.

A preschool that is committed to positive self-concept and culture awareness: Make a statement to the community that each child is unique, has something to offer his environment, and that no matter where he lives, each child brings to the world a celebration of joy and happiness.

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CHILDREN'S FESTIVALS FROM MANY LANDS

FALL:

Continent	Country	Name of Festival	Date	Information
Africa	Nigeria	Zolla Festival	Oct.-time of new moon	Gathering of harvest and start of a new year Bread made of corn flour.
Asia	Burma	The Feast of Lights	Oct.	Coconut, nuts, raisins.
		Harvest Feast	Nov.	End of harvest - rice and coconut.
	China	Kite Flying	Nov. 9	For boys.
	India	The Festival of Lights	Oct.-Nov.-end of monsoon rains	Daughters return home to visit. Thin wheat cakes and fried coconut pastries.
		Brother & Sister Day	5th day of Festival of Lights	Exchange gifts.
		Onam	Sept.	Harvest festival. Vegetarian food.
		Doll Festival	Oct.-for 9 days	Dolls are placed in rows around the walls of a room, representing gods, men & animals. Colored paper & flowers used for decorations Coconuts, cakes, and betel nuts.
	Israel	Yom Kippur	Sept.	Chance to change one's life. New beginning. Apples dipped in honey.
	Japan	Moon Viewing	Oct.-full moon	Singing-write poems about the moon.
	Syria	Harvest Feast	Fall	Community Pot for boiling wheat before storing.
Europe	England	Bon Fire Day	Nov. 5	Roasted potatoes and chestnuts.
	Scotland	Hallowe'en	Oct. 31	Feast of the harvest-with fruit and vegetables. Mashed potatoes with trinkets hidden in them. Ducking for apples.
North America	U.S. & Canada	Hallowe'en	Oct. 31	Dress in colorful costumes.
		Succoth	Late Sept.--early Oct.	Jewish children, harvest feast.
		Hanukkah	End of Dec.	Festival of lights last 8 days. Gifts wrapped in blue & white paper. Children receive new coins and other gifts.
	Trinidad	Divali (Feast of Lights)	Nov. 1	Light small pottery lamps outside the house. Children see that they remain lit.
South America	Bolivia	Little Things	Oct.	A Fair where one can buy articles on miniature size.
	Ecuador	Old Year	Dec. 31	Fried pastry made in donut shapes, dipped after cooking in brown sugar syrup.

CHILDREN'S FESTIVALS FROM MANY LANDS

WINTER:

Continent	Country	Name of Festival	Date	Information
Asia	China	New Year	Jan. 21-Feb. 19	Everyone becomes a year older. Oranges and rice cakes.
		Feast of Lanterns	3rd day of new year	Great Parade.
	India	Makra Sankrant	3 day-winter solstice (sun farthest from equator)	Coming of longer days. Family reunions. Cakes - sesame seeds and brown sugar.
	India (South)	Pongal	Jan. 11, 12, or 13	Thanksgiving for rain & sunshine. Observed by women & children particularly. Rice, peas, beans, lentils (soup).
	Japan	New Year	Jan. 1	Everybody's birthday.
		Girl's Festival	Mar. 3, 4, & 5	Dolls.
		Snow Festival	1 week	Structures build from snow.
	Korea	New Year	Last of Jan. 1st of Feb.	New clothes. Bow to older members of family and receive a coin. Visit friend and family and receive a coin. Honey cakes and barley candy.
	Vietnam	New Year	Feb.	New clothes and exchange gifts.
North America	Canada & U.S.	New Year's Day	Jan. 1	
		Winter Festival	Winter	Two or more groups come together to celebrate a mid-witner feast. Food & dancing.
	Haiti	New Year	Jan.1	Fireworks, gifts of money.

CHILDREN'S FESTIVALS FROM MANY LANDS

SPRING:

Continent	Country	Name of Festival	Date	Information
Africa	Angola	The Feast of Nganja	April	Corn harvest is ripe.
		The Feast of Okambondondo	Feb.,Mar., or Apr.	Held several times a year. Corn, beans, and meat.
		The Feast of Kapesi	After planting time	For girls only.
	Egypt	Smell the Breezes	Mon. after Easter	Family-picnic breakfast of bread, cheese, dried fish, & eggs-colored scarlet, purple, green, & gold.
	Sierra Leone	The New Year Festival	Late April, Early May.	Celebration of water coming and dry season ending.
Asia	Burma	The Water Festival	April 11	All throw water at one another, no one wants to be seen dry, as that would mean he has no friends.
	China	Dragon Boat Festival	May 5	Boat racing. Rice balls.
	India	Baswant (yellow)	Spring	Everyone wears yellow in some part of his clothing. Kite flying.
	Iran	New Year	March 21 (12 days)	Visit friends. Last day-family picnic near some irrigation stream. Meat & Vegetables on skewer and lamb with rice.
	Iraq	Breaking of the Fast	End of May (3 days)	Roasted chestnuts, peanuts, & watermelon seed. Kibbie: wheat & meatballs deep fried. Baklava.
	Japan	Boy's Festival	May 5	Kites
	Korea	Swing Day	May, 5th moon of year	Girls go with women where swings are. Boys go with men & have wrestling matches.
	Thailand	New Year	April - full moon (3 days)	Throw scented water on friends. Men and boys make image of bamboo & tissue, perhaps a pagoda. Rice, fruit, & curry.
		Songkran	Mid-April, end of New Year festival	End of long dry weather, beginning of monsoon rains. Pour water on each other.
Europe	England	May Day	1st Sat. in May	Honor Flora, the goddess of flowers. Flowers woven into garland.
	Italy	Cricket Festival	Spring	Balloons, toys, food and crickets in pretty cages.
North America	Canada & U.S.(Alaska)	Return of the Sun Ceremony	Spring	1st day of the sun after the winter darkness.
	Canada (Nova Scotia)	Apple Blossom Festival	Early June	Parade: children singing & dancing, select Princess for the festival. Tea & reception.

CHILDREN'S FESTIVALS FROM MANY LANDS

SPRING: (Continued)

Continent	Country	Name of Festival	Date	Information
North America (continued)	United States	May Baskets	May 1	Use small box, paper cups covered with fringed tissue paper, filled with flowers, hang on door of a favored friend. Then hide before being seen.
	U.S. (Hawaii)	Lei Day	May 1	Day for showing friendship. Flowers threaded on a string.
	U.S. (American Indian)	Bunny Dance Feast	Spring or anytime	Plains Indian, on some bright day the dancing begins. To the heat of a drum children pretend to hop like bunnies.
		Maple Festival	Early Spring	Iroquois Indian-tapping of the maple trees.

CHILDREN'S FESTIVALS FROM MANY LANDS

SUMMER:

Continent	Country	Name of Festival	Date	Information
Africa	Ethiopia	New Year's Eve	Aug. 31 or 1st 6 days in Sept.	Children receive gifts. Cookies, candy, & lime.
	Ghana	Yam Festival	First 2 weeks in Aug.	Games & food. Yams.
Asia	India	The Thread Ceremony	Late July, early Aug.	Sisters give a bracelet of colored thread to their brothers.
	Indonesia	The Feast of Rice	Late July (3 days)	Harvest of rice. Chicken, fish, rice, & coconut milk.
Europe	Scandinavia	Midsummer	3rd weekend of June	Large bonfire. Dancing and refreshments.
North America	Canada (Nova Scotia)	Highland Games	Weekend in early June	Step dancing & bagpipes, sword dancing, & track & field events.
	U.S. American Indian	Green Corn Festival	In August, several days.	Chief sprinkles tobacco over coals of a small fire & pray thanks for the gift of corn. Then men dance.
		Rain Dance Festival		Hopis & Zunis dance, hoping to bring rain.
South America	Bolivia	The Ribbons		When a baby gets the first head of hair.
Pacific Lands	New Zealand	Maori Poi Ceremony		Folk dance done with balls, called poi. Used to say welcome to visitors.
	Samoa	Greeting Ceremony		May flower chains called Ulas to place around visitor's necks.

CHILDREN'S FESTIVALS FROM MANY LANDS

ANYTIME:

Continent	Country	Name of Festival	Information
Africa	Zaire	Leopard Pantomine	
		Harvest Festival	End of dry season, but before the rains come, to assure a good harvest.
Asia	Burma	Birthday	Children are named by the day they are born on using the first letter of their name. Sunday- all vowels Thursday- p,b,m Monday- k,g,ng Friday- th,h Tuesday- s,z,ny Saturday- t,d,n Wednesday- l,w,(y-noon to midnight)
	Pakistan	Feast of the Gift	Follows the month of fasting. Visit friends & relatives, play games, some toys, usually money for gifts, put in new bags for children.
	Turkey	Candy Holiday	3 days. New clothes. Children are given pretty handkerchiefs, usually with money in them. Candy is passed on silver or glass plates. Baklava is served.
North America	U.S. & Canada	Birthdays	
	British Columbia	Indian Potlatch	Celebrate some special event, such as giving a new name to a child. The child collects presents, not for one's self, but to give away.
	Mexico	Fiesta	May be held in honor of a saint, a religious holiday, or a national holiday, with fireworks.
		Pinata	A party held at Christmas, or somebody's birthday or name day, on the last day of school or any time there is a party for children.

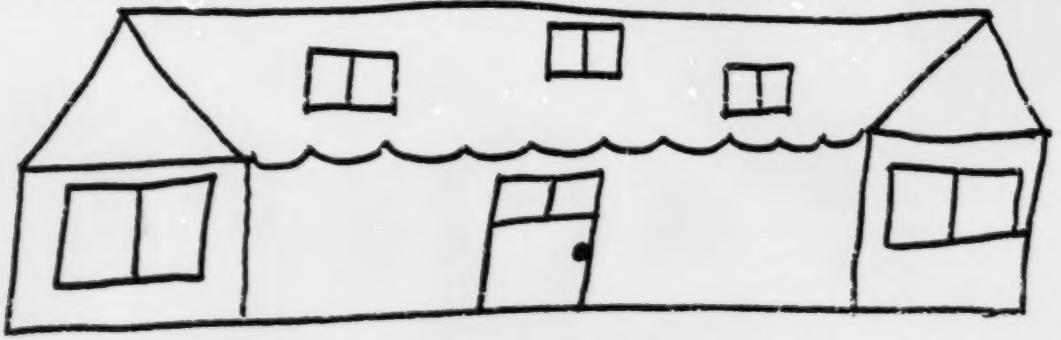
SOURCE: Children's Festivals from Many Lands by Nina Millen, New York: Friendship Press, 1964.

Feast of Lanterns:

I. Draw parade scene on posterboard. Place clips or magnets on wheels of floats. Cut wheels out of posterboard. Sequencing Skills: Clip wheels on in order.
Large — Small, Light — Dark, Story Sequencing
II. Draw parade scene of people carrying lanterns. Use lanterns for sequencing as wheels of floats in Activity #1.
III. Make series of lanterns for seriation: Sizes, Shades of Colors, etc.
IV. Make lanterns for sorting: Colors and Sizes.
V. Make groups of lanterns. Which one is different?
VI. Make large dragon; body divided into parts: a) for puzzle [floor size] b) with basic cuts: number order, letter order, size seriation, and color shade seriation.
VII. Make a house or temple with outlines of various shapes and sizes of lanterns. Make lanterns for children to match to outlines.
VIII. Cover 3 orange juice cans with contact paper. Cut out 15 each of coconuts, nuts, raisins. (See Yom Kippur)
IX. Skill Sorting: We garden scene to depict growing of the 3 foods in VIII. (See Yom Kippur)

New Year - China (See ideas for food)

I. Draw a large house with many windows. Over each window place a piece of red paper folded in half. On the outside of each place a simple picture. On the inside, another picture is placed. Each picture placed on the outside of a piece of paper, must have a matching picture placed on the inside of another piece of paper. One picture is placed on the door of the house. The last paper has a special picture in it the children will enjoy:



Children open star window, find square, open square window, find Δ, etc. Open doors in order to find surprise!!

II. May use same house as Activity #2. Place picture on each window (may be related to any concept - see list). Place related pictures on pieces of red paper to be clipped on to appropriate window.

Children open star window, find square, open square window, find Δ, etc. Open doors in order to find surprise!!

II. May use same house as Activity #2. Place picture on each window (may be related to any concept - see list). Place related pictures on pieces of red paper to be clipped on to appropriate window.

Brother and Sister Day

I. Make series of presents for seriation. Sizes: Large — Small (square), Tall — Short, and Long — Short.
II. Cover boxes with contact paper to make presents of various colors for sorting (about 10 of each).
III. Make presents of various sizes for sorting: large, medium, and small.
IV. Make groups of presents; which one is different? (Size, color, shape, etc.)

Divali:

Draw pottery lamps. Draw flames separate. Match flame to proper lamp. See list of concepts.

Little Things

Collect miniature objects and pictures of the objects represented by the miniatures. Match objects to pictures. Pictures may be presented separately or mounted on posterboard.

Old Year:

See ideas for food.

Ideas for Festivals Involving Food:

I. Cover orange juice cans with contact paper. Cut out 15 each of foods used in festival. Sort into orange juice cans.
II. Use garden scene to depict from planting → harvest growth of appropriate foods.
III. Before & After: Pictures of various foods before & after prepared into a special dish. Example: Apple & apple dipped in honey.
IV. Cut out a basic food (apple, nut, rice, etc.) - large outline on posterboard. Cut out pictures of foods prepared from the basic foods and sort.

Festivals Involving Food:

Zolla - bread from corn flour
Feast of Lanterns - coconut, nuts, raisins
Harvest Feast - rice, coconut
Festival of Lights - thin wheat cakes, fried coconut pastries
Doll Festival - coconuts, cakes, betel nuts
Yom Kippur - apple dipped in honey

Concepts Which Can Be Used on Games:

same color
" " - different shade
" shape
" " - different size
" letters
" numbers
" basic concept depicted
related object
same object
numbers - sets
capital letter - lower case letter
career person - tool or object used by person

V. Pictures of children can be matched with presents (see list of concepts)

Onam:

I. Cut out and mount picutures of food. Which ones could be eaten on vegetarian day?

Doll Festival:

I. Draw a room scene (one wall). Make groups of dolls which can be hung on the wall. This can be done by the child just placing the dolls on the posterboard or by running a clothesline through the posterboard and providing clothes pins for dolls to be hung up with. Dolls may be: Sizes for seriation or Outlines of dolls cut out of different colors; patterning.
II. 2 types of dolls may be made: People and Animals; for sorting.
III. Food: cocnuts, cakes, betel nuts (see The Feast of Lanterns/Yom Kippur)

Yom Kippur:

I. Before and After: Pictures of various foods before prepared into a special dish and after prepared into a special dish. Apple → Apple dipped in honey
II. Choose apple and 2 other foods - cut large outlines out of posterboard and sort pictures of various foods prepared from these 3 foods.

I. Before and After: Pictures of various foods before prepared into a special dish and after prepared into a special dish. Apple → Apple dipped in honey
II. Choose apple and 2 other foods - cut large outlines out of posterboard and sort pictures of various foods prepared from these 3 foods.

Moon Viewing:

I. Divide a piece of posterboard into 2 parts: one day time scene, one nighttime scene with a prominant moon. Sort pictures of: Things seen at night/day, Things done at night/day, and Animals that come out in night/day.
II. Series of moons: Large — Small and Full — Very small sliver.
III. Moon shapes cut out. Concepts such as related objects, matching objects, same colors, shapes, letters, numbers, etc.- placed on moons which are cut in half.

Harvest Feast:

Cut a large pot out of posterboard on "wheat". Write questions of teacher's choice (could pertain to a unit or skill being worked on). Child draws a "wheat", answers question, and places wheat in pot.
I. Place pictures on wheat - 2 of each picture. Use for Memory Game.
II. Could put letters, numbers, shapes, etc. Use with a spinner.
Hint: Laminate before writing skill on "wheat". Then skill can be written in permanent marker. When you wish to change skill spray with hair spray and erase.

Bon Fire Day.

Draw a large fire on posterboard. See Harvest Feast - place questions or pictures on on pictures of potatoes and chestnuts.

Halloween - Scotland:

I. See ideas for food.
II. Sort pictures of fruits and vegetables.
III. Make potatoes. Make a pocket on each potatoe. See list of concept. Picture that "matches" is placed in pocket of potatoe.

Halloween - U.S.A.

I. Draw pictures of children dressed in costumes. Cut into puzzles.
II. Cut out of posterboard, draw trick-or-treat bags and candies. See lists of concepts. Place pocket on each "bag" for candy.